

back with their family. That purpose and meaning come from a job, so often.

So it was an opportunity to talk about the need for us to develop the workforce to meet the needs of our communities and the opportunity to talk about the need for the JOBS Act. I am really pleased that the JOBS Act is in the President's budget this year. I thank President Trump and his administration for including that. It makes all the sense in the world. The higher education bill will be reauthorized this year, we all hope. That is certainly the plan. If that happens, it is the perfect place for having the JOBS Act included.

Senator KAINE of Virginia and I are the coauthors of this legislation. We are hopeful that our colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in this legislation and help us to get it in the Higher Education Act. I know that it is a priority of many members of that committee, and Chairman ALEXANDER, in particular, has a passion for ensuring that we have the training we need out there to get people the jobs to let them achieve their dreams in life.

Passing the JOBS Act will give us an opportunity to help so many Americans have better opportunities, and, just as importantly, it would enable us to help our economy right now because the biggest concern I hear is no longer the taxes. People love the tax cuts and tax reform, and they love the regulatory relief, but they are looking for skilled workers. This is an opportunity. Let's seize it. Let's keep growing our economy and help Americans fulfill their God-given potential.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST BLAKE KELLY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tribute to Nebraska heroes—the men and women who have given their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a powerful story to tell.

Today I will reflect upon the life of Nebraska Army National Guard SPC Blake Kelly. Blake was a typical smalltown Nebraska boy. Born and raised in Shelby, NE, which has a population of just over 700, Blake lived next to the city park. His parents, Randy and Patty, have lived in the same house for 44 years.

Blake's early life was filled with football, track, lifeguarding at the local swimming pool in the summer, band major duties, and playing the drums. In fact, he met his future wife, Christina, at band practice in 1997. He loved to play the drums, and the neighborhood, well, always knew when he was practicing.

When he was old enough to cruise around Shelby, his dad, Randy, bought him a 1976 Dodge Charger. Every smalltown Nebraska boy needs a car. Blake knew everyone around town and everyone knew him. He was always

happy and eager to help someone solve a problem.

In high school, one of his teachers encouraged him to join the National Guard. For Blake, this was an opportunity to spread his wings and go to college using the Guard's tuition assistance program.

In 2000, between his junior and senior years in high school, he went through Army basic training at Fort Jackson, SC. Before graduation in 2001, he asked Christina to marry him. After becoming engaged and graduating from high school, Blake attended advanced training at Fort Knox, in Kentucky, that included Ranger training. He returned home in September 2001 just as life in the United States was changing forever following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Shortly after, Blake enrolled at Southeast Community College in Beatrice to study animal science. There he became interested in rodeo and joined the school's rodeo team. The year 2002 was a busy one for Blake, filled with school, National Guard training with the 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry, known as the Cav, and wedding planning. He and Christina tied the knot on September 7, 2002, just as the Cav was preparing to deploy to Bosnia.

At that time, early Active-Duty Army resources were devoted to fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the United States still had significant commitments to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. The Cav's mission was an ideal one for the National Guard and a critical element in our national security.

The Cav arrived in Bosnia in January 2003, and just before Blake left Nebraska with the unit, Christina learned that she was pregnant. In Bosnia, Blake delved into the mission at hand. He was always ready and eager to serve, and he connected well with the local population. Unit chaplains needed help, and so he embraced his Catholic faith even more deeply by becoming a Eucharistic minister and actively supporting chapel programs.

On July 29, 2003, Blake was killed in an accident involving his convoy and a local vehicle. The loss of Blake was the first casualty of a deployed Nebraska Army National Guard member in over a decade. His community and the entire State were shocked.

He was buried at St. Mary's Catholic Church in rural Nebraska on August 6, 2003. The entire town turned out for the funeral, as did freedom riders from throughout Nebraska. Blake's son Simon was born in September 2003, the month the Cav returned home from their deployment.

Today, Simon is a freshman in high school, and Christina maintains a tight relationship with Blake's family. Randy and Patty, his parents, still live in the same house in Shelby.

In 2014, the town of Shelby dedicated a veterans' memorial, and Blake's family played a prominent role in the dedication ceremony. Blake's spirit lives on, and he is remembered in so many ways.

SPC Blake Kelly embodied the pride of his small town and his State. He served his country with distinction, and he loved his family. I am honored to tell his story.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

YEMEN

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a true humanitarian crisis. This is a crisis that is close to my heart, and that is because it is close to the hearts of so many wonderful people in the State of Michigan.

Michigan is home to a large and welcoming Yemeni American community—one of the Nation's largest—and we are so proud and happy that they are part of our community. Right now these Michigan residents are horrified to watch what is happening to a country where many of them have family members and friends.

More than 4 years ago, war broke out in Yemen. Imagine 4 years of going to bed every night, wondering if this will be the night that a bomb or rocket will hit your home and destroy everything you have, including your family; 4 years of being unable to send your children to school because it is simply not safe for them to be outside; 4 years of deadly disease outbreaks with little access to medical care or even safe drinking water; perhaps worst of all, 4 years of sending your children to bed hungry every night because there is simply not enough food.

It is bad enough to think about being a parent under those circumstances. Imagine what it is like to be a child. You are 4 years old. You don't understand what is going on. You just know that you can't go outside, you can't sleep at night, and you are hungry all the time. There are 4-year-olds in Yemen today who have never lived in a country that wasn't at war.

Sadly, there are 4-year-olds in Yemen today who will never see their fifth birthday. About 1.2 million children are living in active conflict zones, meaning that a stray bullet or rocket could end their life at any moment. It is estimated that a child in Yemen dies every 10 minutes—the length of my speaking today on the floor, every 10 minutes—from a lack of food or diseases that can be prevented with adequate medical care, including vaccinations.

Overall, the United Nations estimates that no matter what we do at this moment—no matter what we do—250,000 Yemeni people will die within the next year due to malnutrition, dehydration, and by diseases like cholera.